

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 10, 12, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

**Committee on Education:
Proposed Amendments to the DAS Certificate Requirements
(Prepared by Council Liaison Jasmine Jones)**

BACKGROUND

The SAA Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) certificate program was introduced in 2012, and was “*designed to provide [members] with the information and tools you need to manage the demands of born-digital records.*” (<https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/das>)

Those seeking the certificate must meet certain requirements including a designated number of courses in each curriculum tier, some of which must be completed in-person, within a designated time frame. The requirements currently state that, “**A minimum of two courses must be taken in person**; the remaining seven courses may be taken online or in person.” (<https://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/das-curriculum-structure>)

DISCUSSION

The Committee on Education put forward a revision to the in-person requirements. The revision will require a minimum of two *synchronous* components (either in-person or virtual), rather than a minimum of two *in-person* courses, to be taken by certificate participants,

The in-person requirement has always posed a hardship to those who:

- do not receive institutionally supported professional development;
- do not receive institutionally supported travel;
- do not receive paid leave as a benefit of employment;
- live in remote areas;
- are differently-abled; and/or
- have extenuating home-life situations.

In addition, the 2020-2021 stay-at-home orders resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the emergency conversion of courses to remote delivery methods.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SAA began to adapt ongoing education course offerings from in-person to remote-learning delivery methods in an effort to meet professional development

needs despite adverse global circumstances. As a result of the newly adopted format, we experienced an overall increase in registrations. Such offerings were advertised with the following additional language:

This course WILL count towards the in-person requirement for the DAS certificate program.

These efforts have shown that remote delivery of many courses is possible and should continue to be an option when pursuing continuing education through SAA. The ability to meet certificate requirements remotely or with a hybrid approach, according to personal preference, adds flexibility to current and potential certificate candidates. Such flexibility may have a positive impact on recruitment efforts.

Additional considerations:

If this motion is approved, the controlled vocabulary of “1-day,” and “Virtual,” in the “Location” field of advertisements/listings; as well as “Virtual,” and “In-Person” in the catalog may need to be amended to something like:

- On-Demand Course = pre-recorded, asynchronous virtual offerings
- Live Virtual Course = synchronous virtual offerings;
- Hybrid Course = courses that include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous portions
- In-Person = In-person synchronous offerings

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the SAA Council approve the following amendments to the DAS certificate requirements:

DAS Curriculum Structure

Core Competencies

The DAS Program is structured to ensure that a DAS Certificate holder is able to:

1. Understand the nature of records in electronic form, including the functions of various storage media, the nature of system dependence, and the effect on integrity of records over time.
2. Communicate and define requirements, roles, and responsibilities related to digital archives to a variety of partners and audiences.
3. Formulate strategies and tactics for appraising, describing, managing, organizing, and preserving digital archives.
4. Integrate technologies, tools, software, and media within existing functions for appraising, capturing, preserving, and providing access to digital collections.

5. Plan for the integration of new tools or successive generations of emerging technologies, software, and media.
6. Curate, store, and retrieve original masters and access copies of digital archives.
7. Provide dependable organization and service to designated communities across networks.

Tiers of Study

The DAS Curriculum is broken into four tiers of study:

- [Foundational Courses](#) focus on the essential skills that archivists need to manage digital archives. They focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the needs of practitioners—archivists who are or will be working directly with electronic records. These courses present information that an archivist might implement in the next year.
- [Tactical and Strategic Courses](#) focus on the skills that archivists need to make significant changes in their organizations so that they can develop a digital archives and work seriously on managing electronic records. They focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the needs of managers—those archivists who manage other professionals and who oversee programmatic operations. These courses present information that an archivist might implement in the next five years.
- [Tools and Services Courses](#) focus on specific tools and services that archivists need to use for their work with digital archives. They are practical courses focused on specific software products and other tools and they focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the needs of practitioner archivists. These courses present information that an archivist could implement immediately.
- [Transformational Courses](#) focus on the skills that archivists need to change their working lives dramatically and transform their institutions into full-fledged digital archives. They focus primarily, but not exclusively, on the needs of administrators—those archivists with oversight over the entire archival enterprise of an institution. These courses present information that an archivist might implement over the course of the next ten years.

Earning the DAS Certificate

A certificate participant has successfully completed (i.e., attended and/or passed examinations for) nine required courses from the four tiers listed below and additionally has passed a comprehensive examination. ~~A minimum of two courses must be taken in person; the remaining seven courses may be taken online or in person.~~ **A minimum of two courses must include a synchronous component (in-person or virtual); the remaining seven courses may be taken synchronously or asynchronously.** You have 24 months to complete coursework and up to an additional 5 months to complete the comprehensive examination following completion of coursework. More knowledgeable participants may elect to test out of Foundational courses.

- Four Foundational courses
- Three Tactical and Strategic courses
- One Tools and Services course
- One Transformational course

Maintaining Your DAS Certificate

The DAS Certificate is valid for five years. DAS certificate holders who wish to renew their certificates will need to complete four courses from the DAS course list, provided the following:

- Renewal classes may be a combination of courses from all tiers; however, only one foundational course may be taken as part of the renewal
- No more than one course may be completed for credit in the first year after the certificate has been awarded
- All classes must be new (no retakes) to the attendee

Support Statement: Adopting this change could provide an opportunity for expanded participation and completion of the DAS certificate.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: Adopting these changes supports goals #2.3 (Deliver information and education via methods that are accessible, affordable, and keep pace with technological change), of SAA's 2020-2022 Strategic Plan.

Fiscal Impact: This change to the DAS Certificate requirements should have an overall net positive effect on the SAA Education budget. More members will find the certificate accessible, leading to additional course enrollments and higher certificate completion rates. In addition, SAA Education will need to budget less for instructor travel reimbursements, meals, and hotel costs associated with in-person teaching.